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RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 3988  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 1421  
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RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 8617  
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DEPT FOR NEA/MAG AND S/CT

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [SNAR](#) [MO](#)

SUBJECT: G-8 EMBASSIES MEET ON MOROCCO COUNTERTERRORISM

Classified By: DCM Wayne J. Bush, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Representatives from G-8 embassies in Rabat discussed counter-terrorism efforts in Morocco at a Feb. 2 Counter-Terrorism Action Group (CTAG) meeting hosted by the Russian Embassy in Russia's capacity as G-8 president. Attendees spoke highly of GOM counter-terrorism efforts but agreed the risk for terrorist incidents in Morocco remains elevated. The group decided to invite a Moroccan official (probably Minister of Interior Governor-Director of International Cooperation Khaled Zerouali) to the next CTAG meeting to discuss their ideas with him. The Russian host noted that a Feb. 17 meeting of G-8 ministers in Moscow will address the subject of extremism and asked that CTAG members send him their thoughts after the meeting which he will summarize and transmit to Moscow. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The Feb. 2 CTAG meeting was attended by representatives from the United States, the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Canada and Japan, in addition to the Russian hosts. Russian Minister-Counselor Mikhail Golovanov said the fight against terrorism will be a top priority for Russia during its chairmanship of the G-8, and invited CTAG members to exchange views on the measures each country is taking in Morocco against extremism.

¶3. (C) Golovanov said he believes radicalism and extremism are on the rise in Morocco in spite of many praiseworthy GOM countermeasures in place. He said extremism remains "very present" in the religious sphere and in political party structures like the Islamist Party for Justice and Development (PJD).

¶4. (C) DCM asked the group how G-8 countries can better combat extremism through public diplomacy. French Polcouns said in her view it is up to Moroccan religious and governmental authorities to come up with a "doctrine" against extremism, and that it is not appropriate for Western countries to develop and propagate views on tolerance for Moroccans. In her view King Mohammed VI and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs have done a good job of this, but more needs to be done.

¶5. (C) The Spanish representative agreed the GOM has made laudable efforts in its fight against extremist ideology, but said the GOM's biggest challenge is to distinguish the legitimate conservatism

that exists in the political sphere from violent extremist elements.

¶6. (C) DCM noted that G-8 countries could assist Morocco's counter-terrorism efforts by bolstering the GOM's border control capacities. There is an intuitive link between drug trafficking and illegal immigration and terrorist movement, and assisting the GOM to better manage its borders could improve the country's counter-terrorism capabilities. Golovanov agreed, noting that even the supposedly "closed" border with Algeria is regularly crossed by human and contraband traffic. The Spanish representative said his government is convinced of a strong link between terrorism and drug/human trafficking.

¶7. (C) The Russian host noted the importance of anti-money laundering legislation and said his government hopes the bill - which has been drafted - passes to parliament soon. The Spanish rep surmised the legislation is not stalled because of opposition to the bill's anti-terrorism function, but rather because it will have a broad-based impact on the informal economy, which the GOM is taking the time to consider carefully.

¶8. (C) The UK rep suggested that CTAG members press the GOM to segregate extremist prisoners from the general prison population to prevent "negative synergies" from arising in the prisons. He noted this has been done in Egypt with some success. CTAG members supported this idea but made no specific proposals.

¶9. (C) DCM responded to a question from the Italian representative by saying the USG has not changed its risk assessment in Morocco since the May 2003 Casablanca bombings and believes the risk of terrorist events in Morocco remains high. The Sahel region, with its open borders and large undergoverned spaces, offers potential refuge. The involvement of Moroccans in terrorist acts abroad is also of concern. Another serious concern comes from movement of fighters from Morocco to Iraq, who pose not only a risk to that country but also to Morocco when they return. DCM said the GOM is sensitized to these risks and is generally doing a good job with its CT efforts, but has also been somewhat lucky in avoiding incidents thus far. The Russian rep said he shared the USG view on the elevated risk and thanked DCM for his assessment.

¶10. (C) Golovanov proposed the group invite Khaled Zerouali, MOI Governor-Director of International Cooperation, to their next meeting, and participants agreed this would be useful.  
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